



CUD COMICS

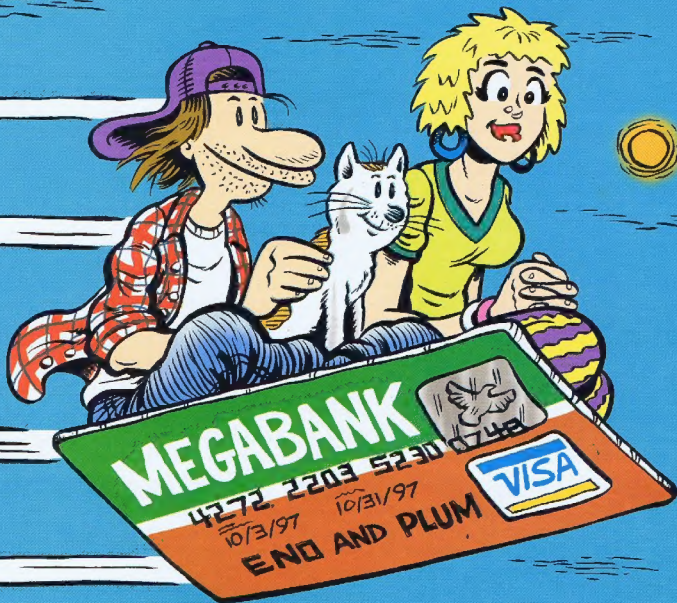
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TERRY LABAN'S

CUD

COMICS™

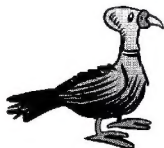


LABAN

TERRY LABAN'S

CUDTM

COMICS



IT

WAS EARLY 1986, AND I'D
GOTTEN BACK FROM A LONG,
POST-COLLEGE TRIP ONLY A FEW MONTHS BEFORE.

I'D JUST MOVED BACK TO ANN ARBOR, INTO A BIG, ROTTEN
OLD HOUSE THAT RENTED OUT ROOMS ON A MONTH-TO-MONTH
BASIS FOR A COUPLE HUNDRED BUCKS, WHICH I SHARED WITH SOME
GUYS I'D NEVER MET. A FRIEND OF MY DAD'S HAD GIVEN ME A JOB AT
THE MAIN OFFICE OF A NOW-DEFUNCT DISCOUNT APPLIANCE CHAIN,
AND EVERY DAY I'D TAKE I-94 TO AND FROM AN INDUSTRIAL PARK IN
DEARBORN HEIGHTS, A BLEAK, POST-WORKING-CLASS INNER-RING
SUBURB ALSO LOCALLY KNOWN AS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE AMERICAN
NAZI PARTY, TO SHOOT THE PHOTOSTATS OF CAR STEREOS AND
DISHWASHERS THAT ILLUSTRATED THE STORE CHAIN'S CIRCULARS
EN ROUTE TO CLUTTERING NEWSPAPERS AND MAILBOXES THROUGHOUT THE
DETROIT METRO AREA. ONE DARK FEBRUARY EVENING, AFTER I'D GOTTEN HOME
AND FIXED MYSELF SOME PRIMITIVE DINNER IN THE PERMANENTLY FILTHY
KITCHEN, I WAS EATING BY MYSELF AT THE BATTERED DINING ROOM TABLE, AND I
HAD A MOMENT. I REALIZED THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, THERE WAS
NOTHING I HAD TO DO. I WAS DONE WITH SCHOOL, I'D TAKEN MY TRIP, MY FAMILY
WAS UNDEMANDING, AND I HAD A JOB THAT WOULD AT LEAST SUPPORT ME. IF I DID
NOTHING TO CHANGE THE SITUATION, I COULD LIVE LIKE THIS INDEFINITELY,
CONTRIBUTING NOTHING MORE TO THE WORLD THAN STATTED PICTURES OF
CHEAP APPLIANCES. THIS WASN'T A SEMESTER, OR A TRIP, WHICH WOULD
EVENTUALLY END AND FORCE ME INTO THE DIFFERENT AND THE NEW. NO,
ANYTHING I DID FROM NOW ON WOULD HAVE TO BE MOTIVATED BY MYSELF
ALONE, IN A STRUGGLE AGAINST THE GRAVITY EXERTED BY ANY CONSISTENT
ROUTINE, EVEN ONE AS BLEAK AS THAT. SURE, IT'S A MUNDANE
REALIZATION, BUT IT TERRIFIED ME AT THE TIME, AND IT'S
TERRIFIED ME EVER SINCE. HOW DO YOU FIND THE ENERGY

TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE? AT THE STICKY TABLE,
MOUTH FULL OF RICE, I LOOKED PAST THE
NEWSCASTER BURBLING MEANINGLESSLY
ON THE LITTLE TV, AND TEETERED
IN THE LATE WINTER WIND
ON THE EDGE OF
NOWHERE.

BY
**TERRY
LABAN**

EDITED BY
**DIANA
SCHUTZ**

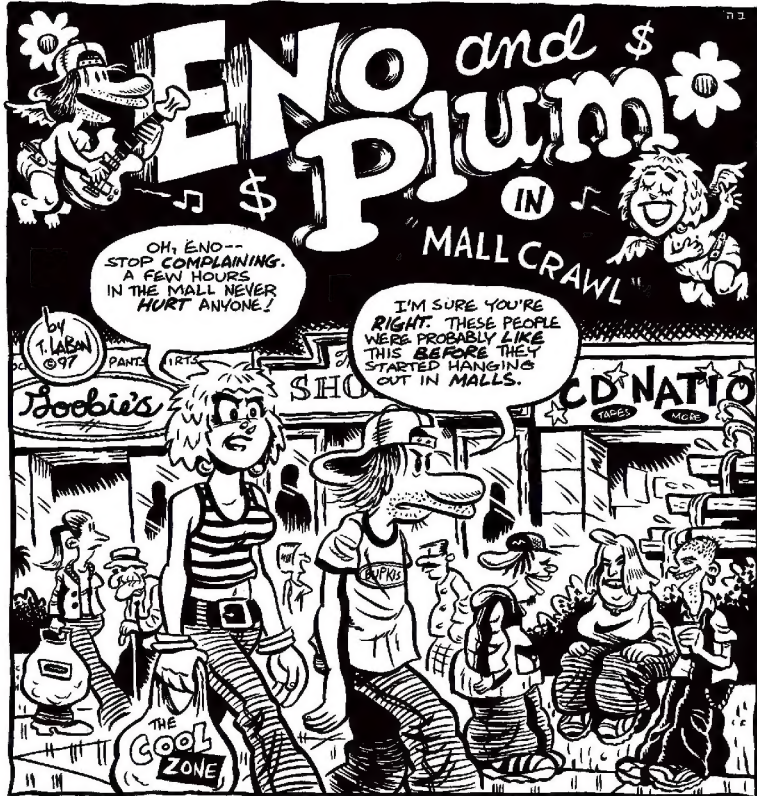
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GASSAWAY**

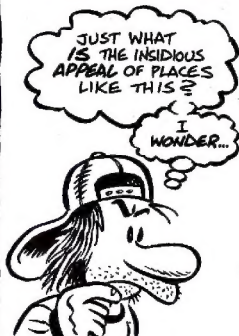


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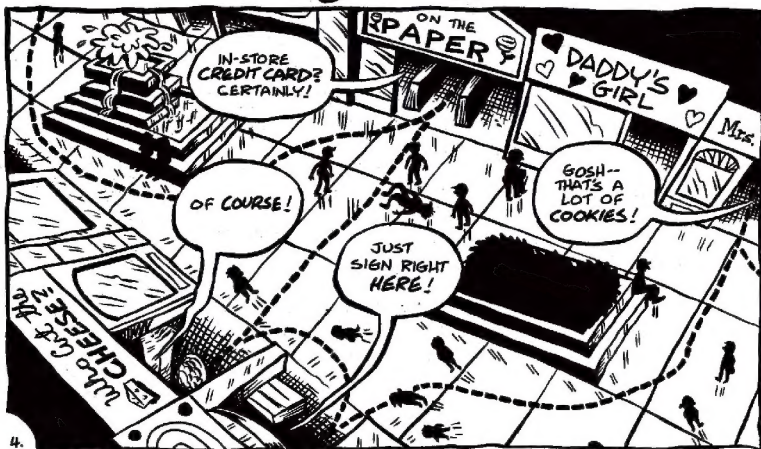






The Adventures
of ENO and PLUM'S
CAT
by TERRI LABAN







HOW MANY TIMES
DO I HAVE TO TELL
YOU KIDS? NO
GANGBANGING
IN THE
MALL!

WAIT!
STOP!

ALPIN



YEAH?

HE'S NOT IN A GANG--
HE'S MY BOYFRIEND,
AND THERE'S SOMETHING
WRONG
WITH HIM!

OOOH...



HE
CAN'T
STOP
SHOPPING!

OH, MAN--
ONE A THOSE,
HUH?

J.C.--
RUN...RUN...



C'MON,
MA'AM--WE'LL
GET 'IM
FIXED UP.

LITTLE
SHIP!

LEMME GO!
POLOS ARE
DISCOUNTED
20%!



So...

NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT,
MA'AM--JUST AN OVERDOSE
OF SHOPPING HORMONES.
IT HAPPENS A COUPLE
TIMES EVERY MONTH.

IT ISN'T
DANGEROUS?

JAM
MEDIC



WELL, SOMETIMES IN CASES
OF GROUP EXPOSURE, THERE'S
A TENDENCY TO RIOT.
INDIVIDUALS, HOWEVER,
ARE COMPARATIVELY EASY
TO CONTROL.

DRUGGING
PEOPLE TO GET
THEM TO SHOP--
AS SOON AS WE'RE
DONE HERE, I'M
CALLING THE COPS!

OH, I
ASSURE YOU--
"CHEMICAL
PROMOTION"
IS PERFECTLY
LEGAL.

WITHIN A FEW
MINUTES, THE INTENSE
INSECURITY THAT LEADS
TO THE DESIRE TO
CONSUME WILL BE
REPLACED BY A SOOTHING
SATISFACTION WITH
THE STATUS QUO.

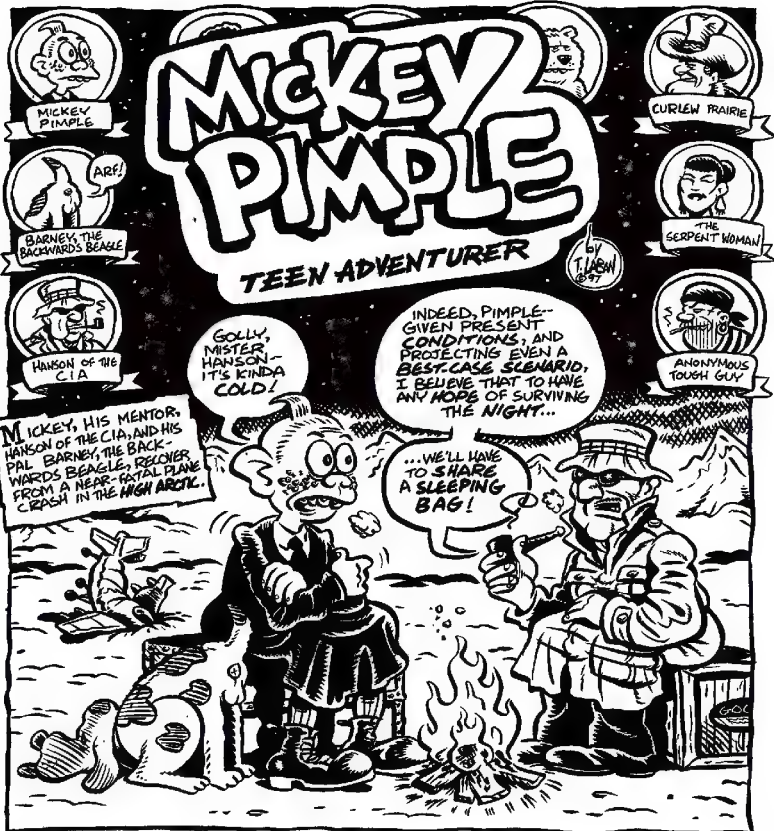
YOU
CAN THAT
WITH
DRUGS?

OH, YEAH--
THIS'S GREAT
STUFF. THEY
USE IT A LOT
IN GRADE
SCHOOLS.

WE'LL
JUST GIVE HIM
A SHOT OF
COUNTER AGENT,
AND HE'LL BE
BACK TO NORMAL
IN A JIFFY.







BEARS ARE NOTHING
COMPARED TO HYPOTHERMIA!
NOW, LET'S TAKE OFF OUR
CLOTHES AND GET IN THE...

MISTER
HANSON!

WHUMP!

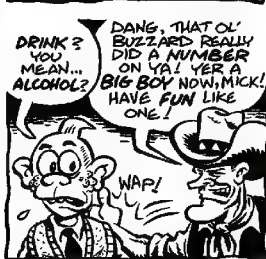
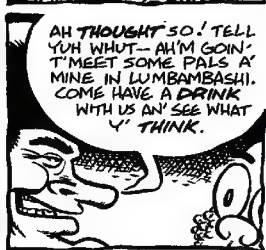
BIAM!

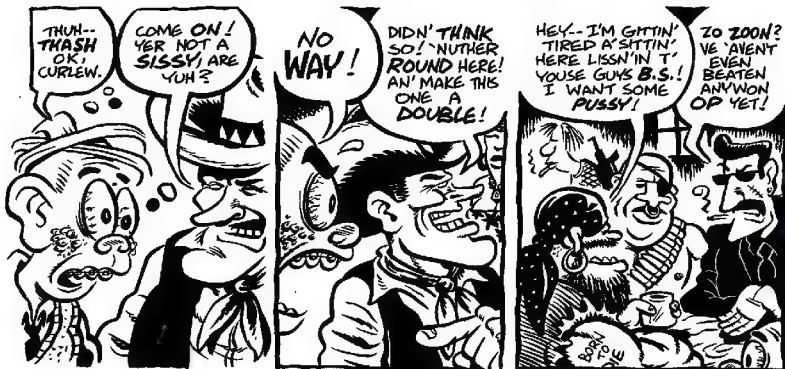
YOU
FELLAS
ALL
RIGHT?

G-GOLLY!
WHO ARE
YOU?

ARE!







MEANWHILE,
AT A NEARBY
SALOON...

TWO WEEKS I
WAITED IN PAGO PAGO,
AND DID HE SHOW
UP? NO!
~SOBS~



I DEVOTED YEARS
TO HIM, AND WHAT DO
I GET? THE HEAVE-
HO FOR SOME COW-
BOY MANQUE WHO
COULDN'T GET SEC-
URITY CLEARANCE
AT A SHOE
STORE! ~SOBS!~

YOU
WANT
ONE HOUR,
SIR, OR
ALL
NIGHT?

THE WHOLE NIGHT,
MY FRIEND-- BUT
JUST TO TALK.
I'M SO LONELY!
~CHOKES!~

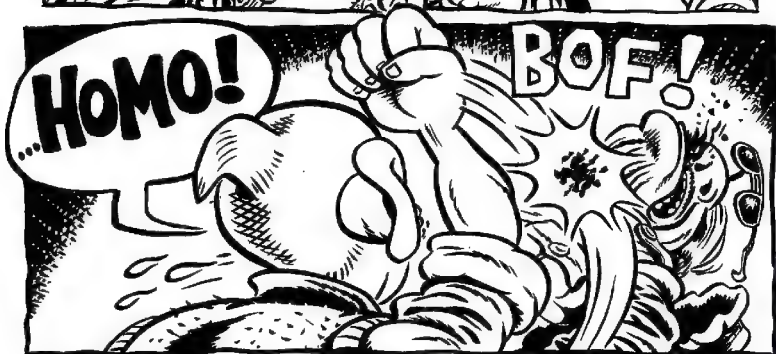


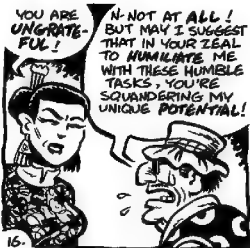
OK, FAGGOTS!
IT'S TIME T'SEE WHAT A
REAL MAN CAN DO
TO YER ASS!



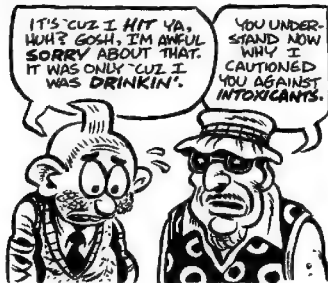
HEY, MICKEY--LOOK
WHO'S HERE!











AFTER A NUMBER
OF DANGEROUS
AND DRAMATIC
INCIDENTS...

GOSH, MISTER
HANSON-- POOR
OL' CURLEW PROBABLY
NEVER KNEW WHAT
HIT HIM!

A TRAGEDY,
BUT OUR WAY OF LIFE
HAS ITS PRICE.



ANYHOW, PIMPLE, I JUST WANT
YOU TO KNOW THAT, EVEN AFTER
ALL THAT'S TRANSPIRED, I'M
WILLING TO LET BYGONES BE
BYGONES AND TAKE YOU
AGAIN UNDER MY WING!

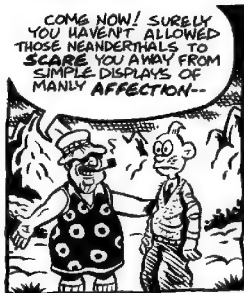
GOLLY,
MISTER
HANSON.



OVERWHELMED,
MY BOY? WELL, YOU
SHOULD KNOW BY NOW
THAT HANSON OF THE
CIA IS NOT A VINDICTIVE
MAN.



COME NOW! SURELY
YOU HAVEN'T ALLOWED
THOSE NEANDERTALS TO
SCARE YOU AWAY FROM
SIMPLE DISPLAYS OF
MANLY AFFECTION--



GIVE
ME A
HUG.



LISSEN,
MISTER
HANSON-- MAYBE
WE OUGHTA FIND
SOMETHING TO
EAT!

PIIMPLE!

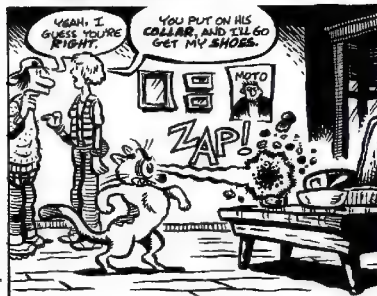
ARF!

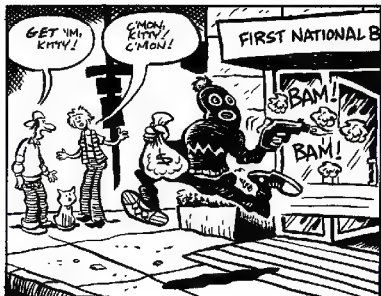


END

ENO *and* PLUM

IN "SUPERCAT" by *THE CAT*





by TERRY LABAN
© 1997



The Author in BE THERE NOW

by TERRY LaBAN

He wanted to be an "underground" cartoonist. Was he stupid, or what?



Terry LaBan, aspiring cartoonist, stands in Ann Arbor's last head shop, reading underground comix. Nearby, behind the counter, bongs sit in orderly rows, plastic and porcelain tubes glittering like the towers of some 1930s City of the Future, along with the more literal *Lord of the Rings* hobbits and big, pink (Yipes! Who buys 'em?) penises.

Actually, it's the past this elaborate paraphernalia recalls — the year's 1980, and hippie is definitely passé. The floors of local bars/bars are piled with hair untrimmed for a decade or more, and though the head shop still stocks plenty of one-hit pipes, rolling papers, and defiantly logoed T-shirts, the place is making a bid for a more up-to-date clientele as well, with more and more floor space devoted to clothes covered with superfluous zippers, sunglasses, porkpie hats, funny buttons, and the other necessary accoutrements of the burgeoning New Wave/Punk (they're still indistinguishable in most people's minds) scene. Heck, the clerk even has his crew cut dyed in a checkerboard pattern.

They still stock undergrounds, though, many no doubt ordered years ago, not just the famous ones, but the *Dr. Atomics*, *Forty-Year-Old Hippies*, and books by Guy Colwell, too. LaBan's seen these things before — a Crumb poster on a wall, an odd *Freak Brothers* passed around a cabin at summer camp — but they've been infrequently encountered, not really part of his world, like pornography or deer hunting. Now, for some reason, they begin to have a grip over him, to occupy a central place in his consciousness. True, they kind of go along with the pot he's smoking by the bushel and the acid he's eating like Pez, but though he has an undeniable sympathy for Vietnam-era youth culture, his comix jones isn't merely an exercise in secondhand nostalgia. Some of the material is dated, of

course, but much of it strikes him with an immediacy unattached to a time or place, laden with possibilities, beckoning him like the Pied Piper down some road he's not even sure exists anymore, but, jeez, this stuff came from somewhere . . .

Just like everyone else, it's Crumb that really screws him up. He buys a copy of a "best of" collection called *Carload o' Comics*, takes it back to the dorm, and studies it like the Torah. Understand, LaBan's always liked comic books — he went through a Conan the Barbarian phase before figuring out that the comics sucked worse than the paperbacks, was a long-time devotee of *Mad* magazine, and always had a soft spot for *Archie* and *Richie Rich* — but, to him, the real cartoonists are newspaper guys. LaBan aspires to do a strip someday, right there on the page under Charles Schulz, four panels, millions of readers, gag a day. Political cartoons — that'd be okay, too.

But the notion that cartooning could be this . . .

It's as if the guy lowered a bucket into some culture well and brought up bucket after bucket of squirming archetypes, a dark mirror of the Saturday-morning status quo that forms the bedrock of mid-century American childhood consciousness. The twisted cuteness, the perverted clichés, the lines layered like fishnets, each alive, screaming, almost crude in their directness but impossible to duplicate, assembling themselves into the fat-legged, big-nippled earth mamas, lovingly detailed cities, sadistic bunnies, and hose-lipped goliwogs —

Oh, to do this kind of work! To pour out the inner workings of your mind, gloriously

disturbing and dark, to stand aside and hurl inky brickbats at the world, to make a career of defiance, sneering at the sad souls who have to — well, you name it; LaBan lives in horror of the post-college void, the dreaded Real World, where only the most extraordinary act of grace can save one from being crushed by the forces of Necessity. But now he understands that, sometimes anyway, grace can be had.

LaBan knows the undergrounds are finished, but he tries his hand at the form anyhow, contributing pages and pages of cluttered, angry comics to the college humor magazine, telling

mystified art professors that *this* is what he's into, man. He can envision himself hanging out with the old guys someday, in California probably, some rural hideaway, a cluttered old hippie place often visited by famous

bohemians in the course of their continent-spanning road trips, where they pause to connect with other famous personages, like himself, sharing joints and their latest revelations as the sun sets over the live oaks and chaparral, falling away to the ocean beyond. Or maybe one of those gritty R. Crumb metropolises, fermenting over drinks in seedy bars, penning graphic revelations beatnik-style in railroad flats and garrets. He studies design, for reasons of practicality, but now he knows his calling.

Where will he be in 17 years? If nothing prevents him, maybe he'll pursue his little dream, finding a few years later, almost to his surprise, that there are indeed like-minded souls producing the equivalent of the old "comix" — without the cultural impact, perhaps, but still for sale on comics-shop stands, which means, he assumes, that their creators are making enough money off them to at least live. Maybe he'll throw his hat in the ring, do a mini, get some attention, and end up having his own comic published, too.

How long after that will it take him to understand the reality of the thing, how little

work like his is read, how much he'll have to go without in order to keep producing it? And, even worse, the growing awareness of his own limitations, which seem to become more and more insurmountable as he works, year after year, improving, but never enough to get him where he wants, *needs* to be?

There may come a time when frustration and despair finally outweigh desire, and he won't be able to stand the thing he once wanted to do more than anything else. And then, he'll stumble miserably through his last issue, hating the smell of the ink and whiteout, sick of chasing a mirage he still half believes is just

up ahead.

But there are worse fates, aren't there? And though he takes no comfort in the fact that there are other people whose lives suck worse than his, the fact is that everything doesn't have to



rise and fall on the satisfaction of a single desire. The years will no doubt bring other compensation — summer nights, brick buildings, lakes, friends, a sympathetic wife, his kid's laughter. He may realize his worse fear — discovering that he really isn't all that special — and still remain, facilities intact, with a chance at some kind of happiness.

At least, when the time comes, he'll be able to look at the other decaying old farts, watching helplessly through cloudy corneas as time wrings the last bit of strength from their withered limbs, and know that when it was still easy to get up in the morning and stay up all night, when his bowels moved like a Rolex and his dick delivered like Federal Express, he gave himself with everything he had to his dreams and found out what he was, without excuse.

In that knowledge, whether it brings pleasure or pain, may he, and you, gentle reader, if you're lucky enough to have a similar opportunity, find peace.

May the Lord shine his countenance upon you, and be gracious unto you, all the rest of your days. Amen.

LETTERS: TERRY LABAN

PO BOX 607056
CHICAGO, IL 60660

TerryL3
@aol.com

Terry —

If it's true that every person transmits and receives on a certain brain-wave frequency, then I guess I can claim to be on your wavelength. I get your jokes. They make me laugh. I let my friends read them, and they laugh too. Well, some of them, anyway. I buy anything with your name on it — the little, scruffy dude with the penis like Coit Tower in San Francisco was a bit over the top [Oom Chucka Willy, in *99 Girls* — TL], but the psilocybin-ingesting gumshoe Eskimo needs his own comics line.

Hoey Jacking
Allston, MA

Funny you should mention it, Hoey, but Muktuk Wolfsbreath,

Hard-Boiled Shaman will be starring in his own three-issue miniseries, written by me, out sometime next year from DC/Vertigo.

Terrydactyl!

I should think Mr. Riverpeace would be glad his fave old music was banned and buried — makes listening to it seem revolutionary all over again. Speaking of Seymour, your Mike Nesmith looked more like Fonzie, and drawing Michael Jackson with the glove makes you seem behind the times and really white!

John Hazard
Bay Shore, NY

Fonzie! Boy, John, you sure know how to hurt a guy. As for my being out of it — well, I gotta admit, I haven't paid much attention to Michael Jackson since before he changed his name to that weird symbol.

Terry —

Just as I had my head wedged into my oven and was fumbling for the gas switch, I caught sight of *Cud* stacked neatly on an altar in my dining room. Fate had

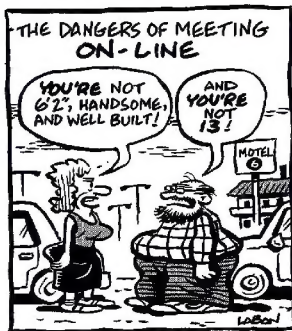
turned my head in the right direction. I had to take one last look at the big feet, big breasts, and bad jokes cracked by your ponytailed intelligence. I read all the *Cuds* in a row — and they saved me. This is no joke — what you do makes a difference. Remember this if you ever get discouraged.

Dan Raeburn
Chicago, IL

There's no "Plugs" section in this issue, but Dan's zine, *The Imp*, contains a beautifully produced and lovingly critical interview with my ol' pal Daniel Clowes. Get it from Dan Raeburn, 1454 W. Summerdale 2C, Chicago, IL 60640 — no price indicated. As for the encouragement — thanks, pal, but it's too late. If you haven't guessed yet, this is the last *Cud* for at least a while. I'm taking an indefinite hiatus so I can have a crisis and do some other things I've been putting off. Thanks to all who've supported me over the years. We'll meet again, don't know how, don't know when, but I do know you'll look for the new paperback collection of *Eno and Plum* stories, *Eno and Plum*, out from Dark Horse this fall.

Take care and be well,

— Terry



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